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ECONOMIC GROWTH

(Economic Reform, Private Sector Development, Trade and Agriculture)

RP a major recipient of biotech funds from USAID

By MARIANNE V. GO

The Philippines remains a major recipient of agri-biotech funds under the Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSPII) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The ABSPI program aims to boost agricultural production.

Frank Shotkoski, director of ABSPII, recently made this assurance during a visit to the newly transplanted papaya ringspot virus-resistant (PRSV-R) papaya seedlings under confined trial in Barangay Paciano Rizal, Bay, Laguna.

Dr. Patricio S. Faylon, executive director of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD), and Dr. Enrico P. Supangco, vice chancellor for Research and Extension of UP Los Banos, together with, Dr. Clive James, chairman of the International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-biotech Applications (ISAAA), and Shotkoski led the site inspection.

Shotkoski was impressed by the progress of the PRSV-R papaya project in the Philippines and promised funding support for it, saying it was a “job well done.”

James also lauded the PRSV-R papaya project team’s accomplishment, noting the excellent job so far.

ABSPII, a five-year program that started in 2002, ended last year. However, the USAID extended the project this year, with the Philippines as one of the major beneficiaries.

A budget of \$17.5 million was spent for the project from 2002-2007.

(Source: Philippine Star, 2/14/08, page C2)